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Review of the 2006 Periodical Literature Related to the Period since 1945 and Relevant to the Study of British Economic and Social History

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This is the second year in which I have reviewed the periodical literature on the economic and social history of the post-1945 years for the *Economic History Review*. Once again, I am struck by the enormous amount of material I have found, and by the fact that much of it is being published in journals not normally read by contemporary historians (about 40 per cent of the articles discussed here are from journals outside the discipline, broadly defined). Such is the volume of material, in fact, that I have decided to publish this longer version of the edited text published in the *Economic History Review* (vol. 61, no. 1, 2008) because the space available to me in that journal (about a quarter of the number of words used here) simply does not do justice to the 146 articles found in more than 70 of the 170 or so journals I have checked. Even so, I fear that the sheer quantity of material I have had to wade through means that articles worthy of inclusion have inevitably been missed.

My review is divided into sections as follows:

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Economics and Economic History

This was a year in which economic history per se was not to the fore. Nonetheless, there were a number of articles relevant to the economic historian. On the issue of economic performance, for example, Bordo and Rousseau examine relationships between finance, growth, legal origin, and the political environment in an historical cross-section of seventeen countries between 1880 and 1997. They find that relationships between a country's institutional situation and financial development are not always clear, notably between 1945 and 1970, when fast growth occurred despite a good deal of political instability in Continental Europe. Atesoglu and Smithin investigate empirical real wage and productivity dynamics in the G7 countries using annual data for 1960-2002, their findings tending to confirm the 'profit paradox', a positive relationship between economic growth and the aggregate profit share, and suggesting that the frequent support of business interests for deflationary economic policies is a puzzle. Atkinson reminds us that differences in the ways countries measure output can materially affect how we view their relative economic performance. And Eichengreen and Razo-Garcia consider the far-reaching changes in the structure of the international monetary system that have occurred in the past twenty years. On productivity, Mayhew and Neely edited a special issue of the *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* devoted to opening the 'black box' of productivity'. Their introductory article attempts to put these contributions into context and to show where they fit into the broader policy debate. In the same journal, Crafts finds that, consistent with endogenous growth models, there appears to be quite strong evidence that regulations which inhibit entry into product markets have an adverse effect on TFP growth.

Turning to economic thought, Peach and Dugger review economic thinking on abundance, noting that 'abundance economists' include such diverse thinkers as Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John Maynard Keynes, and arguing that 'the concept of scarcity has no right to a monopoly position in academic economics'. Layard throws down a challenge to the profession with his plea for public economics theory to undergo radical reform to incorporate the psychology of welfare and its implications for happiness. Pommini and Tondini set out to show how the neoclassical theorists incorporated the idea of increasing return in the formal models of economic growth: their central point being that the recent revival of interest in this notion depends on a vision of economic growth as driven by knowledge accumulation and no longer by capital accumulation as in the Solovian tradition. Elsewhere, de Vroey examines Hicks' partial recantation in 1976 of the temporary equilibrium framework set out in his book *Value and Capital* (1937), arguing that Hicks' change of mind was unjustified. An interesting special issue of *History of Political Economy* looks at twentieth-century demand theory with its editors, Mirowski and Hands, suggesting that it is 'much more complex, contingent and ... "mangled"' than the standard story would suggest. Articles of particular interest in this issue are Hands on integrability, rationalizability, and path-dependency in the history of demand; and Kirman's piece on demand theory and general equilibrium, which argues that economists have 'become slaves to [mathematical] techniques' and that this explains the discipline's persistence 'with a model that, to any outsider, seems such a poor description of what actually happens in markets'. Elsewhere, in an interesting piece by Ormerod, the role of what Hayek called 'professional second-hand dealers in ideas' such as journalists and commentators in causing particular economic ideas to dominate postwar political economy is explored.

Business History

Agricultural matters were ill-served this year, notwithstanding Tichelar's discussion of the Labour Party's somewhat ambivalent attitude to hunting in the first half of the twentieth century, but business history was again quite lively. Thus Bakker examines PolyGram's rise and the way in which it was increasingly forced to differentiate outputs for segmented markets, and in doing so developed a decentralized organizational structure to fit the shifting business environment. Goddard et al, examine evidence on Gibrat's Law, finding inconclusive evidence that firm growth is either random or near-random but strong and consistent evidence of mean-reversion in profit rates. Higgins, in an examination of the UK textile industry, finds no relationship between restructuring success and the degree of corporate control but argues that, to the extent that the market lacked depth, abnormal profits accrued to market-making entrepreneurs such as Alliance, and decentralized market-led strategies were more successful than strategies based on the integration of production to achieve scale economies. In the same sector, Ollerenshaw examines the rise and fall of Cyril Lord.

In the energy sector, Millward considers the roles of business and government in electricity network integration in Western Europe, arguing that integration developed successfully where central governments became actively involved. And Chick considers the shift from coal to oil in the French and British economies between 1945 and 1972, analysing the influence of economists and economic concepts on fuel-policy making in each economy.

More conceptually, Michael Moran explores the turn away by business from the collective representation that characterised British industry and commerce in the first half of the postwar period towards 'do-it-yourself' representation, arguing that going it alone has intensified the degree to which businesses are hostile brethren and that the 'long-boom' since 1992 may conceal underlying weaknesses arising from this shift to a 'disembedded capitalism'.

Policy History

In terms of economic policy, recent discussion in Booth et al of the attack on monetarism by the 364 economists in their letter to *The Times* in 1981 prompts Congdon to attack Nickell's position (that the 1981 budget was 'over the top'). Congdon argues that it was above-trend growth – and not just growth – that resumed within a few quarters of the budget. Nickell responds by reminding Congdon that the depression continued to worsen until the first quarter of 1983 but, in a rejoinder, Congdon reiterates his view that "The 364 were over the top, not the 1981 budget". One suspects there will be no meeting of minds here.

Looking at infrastructure policy, Millward suggests that factors like the reconstruction that occurred after the Second World War, the process of catch-up and convergence in technologies, and the resource endowments of different countries had much bigger effects on productivity levels and growth rates in the infrastructure industries than the shift from nationalised to privatised regimes.

On public expenditure, Mullard and Swaray considers whether major differences existed between postwar Conservative and Labour governments in prioritising public expenditure programmes, finding that Labour governments were associated with increased spending on health, education, housing and the environment while Conservative governments were associated with increases in defence and law and order. Also examining public expenditure, Scott uses roads policy 1945-60 as a case study to

argue that Britain's relatively low level of government investment in transport infrastructure flowed partly from governments' overriding emphasis on macroeconomic stabilisation and partly from the low priority given to infrastructure investment when compared to areas considered politically more important such as defence, housing, and agriculture.

In terms of specific transport policies, Ishaque and Noland give us an historical perspective on pedestrian policies in Britain and Moran explores the progressive concern of government to ensure the safety of pedestrians, a concern which generally relied on appeals to good sense and civic duty rather than legally enforceable rules about crossing the road. Merriman examines how the advent of motorways led a range of cultural commentators and experts to attempt to predict, measure, problematize and effect changes on the movements of drivers and vehicles. And, on the railways, Quail considers the crisis that had engulfed the UK's nationalised railways by 1960, arguing that a focus on both this and the subsequent Beeching cuts has obscured determined and coherent earlier attempts to install modern methods of management accounting in the 1940s and 1950s. On industrial relations in the transport sector, Temple considers the short history of the National Busworkers' Association, arguing that it ended in failure because the bus companies, encouraged by the Government, steadfastly refused to recognise the union for negotiating purposes.

More general policy areas also receives attention. Grant highlights the ways in which the government sought through the 1951 Festival of Britain to inculcate the idea of Britain as a place worth celebrating and knowing better; in short, she argued, it tried to use the Festival to sell Britain as a tourist destination. Davis discusses the making of drug policy in the late-1960s and early-1970s and, on the subject of illegal drugs, Mold examines the foundation and early work of the voluntary organization Release.

In the arena of race relations, in an interesting article that seeks to build bridges between scholarship on sociological institutionalism, lesson-drawing and policy transfer, and historical institutionalism, Bleich examines the 1967 and 1976 Race Relations Acts. He highlights the ways in which the architects of each Act learned different lessons from the USA, the lessons learned in 1976 reflecting the fact that much had changed in the interim. In large part, of course, this influence on policy was a reflection of the influence of studies of race relations by American sociologists on their UK counterparts, an influence expored by Clapson.

Political History

In the arena of more general political history, 2006 was also a busy year. For example, an entertaining piece by Theakston and Gill reports the results of a 2004 survey of academics specialising in British politics and/or modern British history, asking them to rate all the 20th-century British prime ministers in terms of their success in office and also asking them to assess the key characteristics of successful prime ministers. The top-ranked PMs were (in descending order) Attlee, Churchill, Lloyd George and Thatcher.

Several articles deal with voting and psephology. Andersen et al, for example, assess the impact of social class and local context on individual vote in Britain from 1964 to 1997, finding no evidence for a process of individualization of the voter and suggesting that both individual and contextual social class effects on voting remained fairly stable. DuMond Beers describes the gradual integration of polling into the political system after World War II, exploring the ways in which this integration was slowed by ambivalence rooted in fears that such polling would undermine the right of voters to

express their opinions through the ballot box. The impact of television on voting is explored by Gentzkow who, whilst focusing on the USA, has much to say that is relevant in the British context. Then, in another interesting piece, Fisher et al consider the role of the constituency agent, a largely overlooked actor in the political process, with the bulk of the analysis focusing on their role in the 1950s and on the serious rethink of that role which took place in the 1990s. Denham and Garnett provide a useful survey of several post-war think tanks whilst Newton explores the power of the mass media in modern British politics via a case study of various events in the USA since the 1960s and of Britain in the 1980s.

In a special issue of *Contemporary British History* edited by O'Hara and Parr, a number of scholars seek to rescue from the condescension of (not least new Labour) posterity the reputation of the 1964-70 Wilson governments. In his own article in this issue, O'Hara argues that, in an increasingly unstable and rapidly changing economic environment, their economic record is, if not hugely impressive, then at least relatively creditable. Pemberton considers the importance of tax reform in Labour's modernisation project. Changes to the machinery of government were also central to Labour's policy agenda during 1964-70 and Blick unpicks Wilson's civil service 'revolution'. He notes that whilst it was not entirely original, nor complete, nor fully successful, some of the innovations, such as the incorporation of more outsiders into Whitehall, the first use of special advisers, and the establishment of the Ministry of Overseas Development and the Welsh Office, did last. Blick also draws our attention to similarities between Wilson's public administration agenda and that pursued under Tony Blair after 1997 – not least the deployment of special advisers and attempts to co-ordinate government and communications more fully from the centre. Likewise, Thornton and Tyler each attempt to discover a distinctively Wilsonian approach to social policy and industrial relations respectively. Tyler demonstrates how senior ministers' concerns with the structure of the economy, and their wish to intervene in its workings, led Wilson and Castle towards *In Place of Strife*. Thornton focuses on the failure of the 1964-1970 Wilson governments to implement two radical election pledges: to produce a comprehensive state earnings-related pension scheme and to introduce the 'income guarantee' – a minimum benefit to be paid without recourse to the traditional means test. Several other articles on foreign policy published in this issue are dealt with elsewhere in this review.

In other analyses of postwar Labour politics, Tanner explores the challenge posed for Labour in the 1960s by the rise of internal nationalisms, arguing that the party struggled to overcome entrenched policy orientations, or to counter the 'national' tensions and rivalries which existed within British territorial management and within 'Britishness' itself. Meredith undertakes a broad reassessment of the relationship between Croslandite and New Labour conceptions of equality. Fielding and Tanner argue that the popularity of the left in the constituencies during the 1970s and 1980s stemmed from its capacity to attract and absorb existing forms of discontent within the party, and to marry these with a new rhetoric. And Dorey reminds us that throughout its one hundred year history, the Labour Party has never been able to agree on how the House of Lords should be reformed.

Although the attention of political historians is focused on the history of the Labour Party at the moment there are also interesting articles on the Conservatives. For example, Tomlinson argues that the political use of economic 'decline' was an important factor behind Conservative electoral hegemony between 1979 and 1997. Phillips considers the national miners' strike of 1972, highlighting the way in which it undermined Edward Heath's Conservative government and sharpened social conflict. But he concludes that the common interpretation of the strike as a 'victory for violence'

which legitimised the Thatcherite attack on organised labour in the 1980s is disingenuous. And even the Liberals get a look in for a change, with Dutton's description of Jo Grimond's hopes for a major realignment on the left of British politics in the mid-1960s.

In public administration, Horton traces the origins, development and decline of the public service ethos in the British civil service and the extent to which it has been supplanted by a new set of values, beliefs and institutional relationships since the 1980s. Davis sees postwar declinism as the principal factor feeding criticisms of what came to be seen as a failing civil service and the reform of that service under Heath after 1970. And Elcock provides a useful survey of the decline of local government in the postwar period.

Foreign and Commonwealth Policy

But it is perhaps in the arena of foreign and commonwealth policy that political historians were most active in 2006. For example, Frank looks at the origins and development of the little-known campaign in late-1945 to raise public awareness in Britain about deteriorating conditions in Central Europe and to rally support behind measures to find a political solution at an inter-state level to the German refugee crisis.

But much attention this year is focused on the end of empire. For instance, Devine considers the apparent paradox that Scots, despite having played an important role in the emergence of the British empire, greeted its demise with general indifference. The reason, Devine argues, is two-fold: by the end of the interwar period imperial markets were not longer seen to be of much economic benefit to Scotland; and, in the years after 1945, it was state intervention in industry, political commitment to full employment and, above all, the welfare state, that slowly delivered security and material improvement to the mass of Scots.

Of the many continuing analyses of the post-imperial experience, one might also cite Mckenzie's consideration of whether British confidence that the Commonwealth could bolster its international status and extend its global reach after the Second World War was a product of self-delusion or nostalgia. In fact, argues Mckenzie, the former 'white dominions' chose to offer extensive and tangible support because it was in their respective self-interest to do so. Though Benvenuti reveals that Australia's doubts about Britain's willingness and ability to maintain a significant military presence in Southeast Asia long pre-dated the decision to withdraw from 'east of Suez' and she explores debates within the Australian government about where exactly the country's main strategic interests lay.

Of course, the Commonwealth remains a rather hard to define beast, and this can clearly be seen in Murphy's use of recently released official papers to examine British planning for the announcement of the death of Elizabeth II to the Empire / Commonwealth, and for the involvement of Commonwealth representatives in the proclamation of her successor. Murphy notes that, although the debates generated by this process tended to revolve around relatively minor issues of protocol, they were informed by a much more serious concern: the extent to which the institution of the British monarchy should adapt to meet the needs of the 'new' Commonwealth.

There was much written this year on the relationship between Britain and its former colonies in Africa. For instance, we have Kelemen's evaluation of the widely held view that the Attlee governments lacked a distinctive approach to colonial affairs via an examination of the Labour movement's post-war institution building activities in

Kenya. The argument advanced is that Labour leaders drew on their movement's historical traditions to encourage forms of African economic and political activism which they thought would likely stabilise colonial rule. A posthumously published piece by the late Martin Lynn noted that policy-makers did not envisage early self-government for sub-Saharan colonies, of which Nigeria was the most important, not least because of their perceived political and economic value. However, Lynn found that Britain's attempt in 1953 to stabilise colonial rule in Nigeria through the introduction of a quasi-ministerial system forced the British to accept the goal of self-government and to concede greater autonomy to the regions than they had previously envisaged. This, he argued, was a turning point in the decolonisation of Nigeria and, contrary to the claim that it was determined by developments in the Gold Coast/Ghana, was largely the result of Nigeria's own political tensions and aspirations. Elsewhere in Africa, Alexander argues that Rhodesia's declaration of UDI produced a shift in political power from the Cabinet to the Labour Party that served to transform the government's relations with the Commonwealth as the focus shifted to issues of development aid and conflict prevention. A more critical view of this crisis is that of Coggins, who argues that Wilson was compelled by contradictory pressures to adopt an equivocal policy towards UDI and that, whilst this avoided potential serious consequences for the British economy and British diplomacy, it left unresolved questions of Rhodesia's future which were decided by Zimbabwe's liberation war in the 1970s.

Stockwell, however, is somewhat sceptical of much that is being presently published in colonial history, arguing that official records are neither complete nor always transparent, many obfuscate the aims and motives of decision-makers or acquire in retrospect a significance which they did not enjoy at the time of writing. This need not nullify their value, argues Stockwell, provided they are interrogated, like any other source, with scepticism and imagination as well as with knowledge and understanding of their historical context.

A focus on the wider world through the lens of empire is, however, decried by Barkawi and Laffey. They argue that the Eurocentric character of security studies as it has developed since World War II has led to a distorted view of Europe and the West in world politics and has prevented adequate understanding of the nature or legitimacy of the armed resistance of the weak.

Europe

Nevertheless, much of the periodical literature published in 2006 is more literally Eurocentric: concerned with Britain's developing relationship with the 'new Europe'. Ellison, for example, considers the fraught Anglo-French relationship between 1958 and 1967, arguing that de Gaulle was increasingly swimming against the tide as the Cold War served to stimulate a general belief amongst other European leaders in the benefits of interdependence and integration through a reformed NATO and Atlantic Alliance and an advancing EEC.

Parr argues that, whilst Wilson's decision to apply for Community membership for a second time in 1967 certainly indicated a recognition that Britain's international standing had reduced, it was also intended to retain British political independence and to bolster Britain's influence in Europe and the USA. Wilson's decision is often seen as owing as much to the management of internal Labour party politics as to a coherent and strategic foreign policy vision but Parr's view is that Wilson genuinely sought Community accession and that as Britain retreated from East of Suez Europe assumed greater importance in Britain's foreign policy.

Entry into the EEC is often seen as one of the Heath government's few substantive achievements and Gliddon examines the Heath government's alleged attempt to influence the BBC and ITV's coverage of the issue in the lead-up to the crucial parliamentary vote of 1971 on the principle of joining. He finds that the government did try hard to influence the broadcasters, sometimes heavy-handedly and unconstitutionally, but that they largely resisted such pressure with markedly unbalanced coverage of the Community being rare, and where it did occur, argues Gliddon, it was the product of individual journalists' opinions rather than pressure from Whitehall.

As the EEC developed, of course, it plainly gained in political importance. One aspect of this was the growing power of the European Commission, a development explored by Maes in his analysis of macroeconomic and monetary policy making at the Commission in the 1960s. This article shows the ascent of the Commission as an actor in the monetary area, notwithstanding the relatively limited provisions of the European Economic Community Treaty.

Of course, a consistent strain of British political and public opinion has been sceptical about 'Europe'. A post-imperial crisis in British politics has embedded a structural susceptibility to populist politics, according to Gifford who goes on to suggest that the populist manifestation of Euroscepticism has been a significant expression of this crisis. Elsewhere, in an insightful article, Daddow explores the uses of history in contemporary Eurosceptic discourse in Britain, focusing on popular Euroscepticism in the tabloid press. In it he analyses the rhetorical strategies employed by the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail* to garner support for their line on Europe, suggesting that the appeal of their discourse resided in its recourse to national history of the school textbook variety and going on to argue that the discipline of history has thereby been an unwitting accomplice in making Euroscepticism so popular amongst the British public, press and politicians. In another piece, published in *Government and Opposition*, Daddow persuasively argues that an overly reverential attitude to recent martial history on the part of the British, and a marked neglect in popular discourse of the peacetime dimensions of modern European history since 1945, both serve to exaggerate the tendency in the country to fall back on glib images of Britain as a great power with a 'special relationship' across the Atlantic and on a view of Europe as a hostile 'other' to be confronted rather than engaged with constructively.

Strategic Policy and the Cold War

Fifty years on, the Suez crisis continues to fascinate, though I could find only one article on the topic published to coincide with the anniversary. In it, Onslow explores the ways in which Julian Amery and Neil McLean, key members of the Conservative backbench faction the Suez Group, sought to shape the climate of political debate in the crucial period prior to Nasser's decision to nationalise the Suez Canal Company and during the ensuing Suez crisis.

But Suez was not the only 'war for oil' in the 1950s, to use a phrase redolent of the present. Thus Beck continues his illuminating discussion of the attempt by the civil service to 'fund experience' by analysing the uses made by the Foreign Office of its study into the 1951 Anglo-Iranian Abadan crisis. Confronting policymakers with the contemporary realities affecting Britain's role in the world, the historical study prompted serious thinking about the case for a radical change of direction in both foreign policy and methods – though, generally speaking, the Foreign Office actually made little use of history in the actual policymaking process.

Turning to the subject of the Cold War, Danchev examines the use and abuse of the special relationship as cultural referent, rhetorical construct, and political imperative. He notes that by the end of the Cold War the concept was a pale shadow of its former self but argues that this was much less evident in London than it was in Washington. A contrary perspective is offered by Marsh and Baylis, who contend that a number of critical continuities in post-World War II British foreign policy survived the end of the Cold War and have since contributed heavily to the determination of the British foreign policymaking elite to maintain the “special relationship” at the same time that Britain pursues a leadership role within Europe. In the history of the special relationship, Britain’s contribution to the development of nuclear weapons is often cited as a factor, but Lee suggests that in reality this contribution was ‘in no sense vital and actually not even important’.

MacDonald analyses a small but important event in the history of the Cold War – the annexation by Britain of the remote Atlantic island of Rockall in September 1955. He suggests that the motivation was not the annexation to Britain of valuable fishing and oil reserves but because Rockall represented a strategic vantage point from which Soviet intelligence could potentially observe the test-firing from South Uist of Britain’s first nuclear missile, the American-made ‘Corporal’.

The Cold War was as much a propaganda conflict as one fought between soldiers and politicians and broadcasters stood at the very centre of that battle. In this context, the BBC’s decision not to broadcast *The War Game* in 1965 continues to resonate. That there was pressure from Whitehall (not from Westminster) not to show the film cannot be doubted, argues Chapman, but he suggests that the misgivings of Sir Burke Trend and other senior government officials about the partiality of *The War Game* merely confirmed the view already formed by the BBC’s Chairman of Governors Lord Normanbrook, supported by the Director-General Sir Hugh Greene, that it was ‘too horrifying for the medium of broadcasting’. In another article on the same topic, Shaw suggests that *The War Game*’s chief significance lay in its ability to stimulate debate and activism in relation to the nation’s nuclear deterrent on various levels well into the 1980’s, and he argues that one of the keys to understanding this is the use made of the film by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. By the mid-1960s, argues Shaw, CND was torn by internal feuds and its message undercut by widespread assumptions that the Cuban Missile Crisis had demonstrated that deterrence worked. The organisation therefore regarded *The War Game*, with its all too believable images of a post-apocalyptic Britain, as little short of a godsend. By hiring it out to schools, colleges, trade unions and other interested bodies CND was able to use the drama as a potent recruiting tool.

Northern Ireland

Perhaps spurred by recent developments and the apparent possibility of a permanent end to ‘The Troubles’, the year saw a number of articles dealing with this topic. In a close analysis of the events of ‘Bloody Sunday’ on 30 January 1972, for example, Blom-Cooper concludes that the march organised by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was not illegal but that the ban placed on that march by the government almost certainly was unlawful, there being serious doubts as to whether the emergency was such as to justify derogation from article 15 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In the half-century before 1972, London reputedly adopted a hands-off attitude to devolution in Northern Ireland. Mitchell argues that, whilst this was true of the formal machinery of government, what Bagehot referred to as the ‘dignified’ part of the

constitution, the 'efficient' part, most notably relations between civil servants in Whitehall and Stormont, highlights a more complex picture of intergovernmental relations. He also argues that financial relations were marked by ad-hocery and inefficiency with the rhetoric of parity and leeway hiding considerable diversity in public policy provision in Northern Ireland compared with the rest of the UK.

Much attention has been paid to nationalists in the context of Northern Ireland; rather less to Unionists. In an informative paper Patterson noted that Ulster Unionism, which is often seen in monolithic terms, was in fact subject to significant internal stresses in the post-1945 period. Unionists in the west and south of the province were concerned that policies adopted by the Stormont government were undermining Unionist political control in these areas. This article focuses on how the complaints and pressures from this important group were dealt with by the leadership of the party and the government and the obstacle they represented to a timely reform of the regime.

The Troubles are often acknowledged to have begun in 1968. Contact at congresses and through the media with other leftists, argues Prince, enabled Northern Ireland's 'sixty-eighters' to conceive of themselves as part of an imagined community of global revolt. They shared similar goals and tactics. Like their comrades on the continent and across the Atlantic, the region's sixty-eighters tried to attract attention and support by provoking the authorities into an overreaction. In a country dominated by the sectarian divide, however, clashes between Catholic protesters and Protestant police officers were always more likely to lead to communal conflict than class struggle.

Cultural History

It is cultural and social history, however, that are the most fecund of the sub-disciplinary areas under consideration here. In cultural history, some of these contributions have already been touched upon. But other contributions are notable. In *Contemporary British History*'s reassessment of the 1964-70 Labour governments, for example, Black explores Jennie Lee's tenure as Arts Minister and examines the cultural and financial tensions over the status and definition of the arts, both within government and between government, a vibrant artistic community, and the public.

In another issue of *Contemporary British History*, Edmunds argues that two aesthetic assumptions dominated the BBC's broadcasting of contemporary 'art music' during the 1960s and early 1970s: that change was preferable to stability; and that novelty guaranteed value. This, he suggests, helps explain why the labels 'contemporary' and 'avant-garde' became indistinguishable during the 1960s and it underpinned the logic by which more traditional but still contemporary works were excluded from programmes devoted to twentieth century music.

Sticking with the BBC, in the late 1960s and early 1970s there was a new intensity to complaints from listeners to BBC Radio about the strong language they heard on the air. Hendy sees this as in large part a function of a new commitment on the part of many producers within the BBC to reflect contemporary society more closely than it had done in the past, with the use of demotic speech in dramas and documentaries being one dimension of this change. Finally, Johnes discusses the 1953 FA cup final - the first cup final to reach a mass television audience and, he suggests, a match that was intertwined with the ideas of modernity and tradition that ran through British culture in the early 1950s.

Social History

In a conclusion to a special issue of the *Journal of Social History* on the future of the sub-discipline, Stearns notes that the expansion of social history research over the past several decades provides an exciting opportunity for practitioners that begs for more formal and systematic exploration and argues that much could be gained from a more active and explicit engagement with the concept of behavioural history. In this same issue, Webster, suggests there is much to be gained from more consideration of the history of transnational movements of people, arguing that it has the potential to complicate, expand and revise existing social histories – for example, by showing that many of those recruited for domestic work in middle-class British homes in metropolis and empire, and later in domestic work in public institutions, had crossed national boundaries. More depressingly, Hunt finds that the rise of historical reality programming has meant the demise of social history on television as a political project, if by social history we mean the organizational and ideological history of the labour movement. And, in a separate issue of this journal, a thought-provoking review article by Stearns calls for a more rigorous historical approach to the study of the role of fear in contemporary society.

Elsewhere, Cross considers the expansion and transformation of leisure in the long (uneven and inequitable) trend toward affluence in the 20th century through an exploration of the possibilities and difficulties of doing a comparative social history of 20th century pleasure crowds. Abrams, whilst noting the economic prosperity and cultural vibrancy that have characterized the Shetland Islands since the 1970s, considers the way in which hand-knitting maintains its hold in the popular imagination and explores the ways in which it has been resurrected and re-imagined as a prominent part of Shetland's contemporary identity. In a rather less homely setting, O'Connell uses Belfast as a case study to explore the history of joyriding from the 1930s to the present day.

In the arena of gender history, Aiston explores representations of university women as presented in the student press of the University of Liverpool between 1944 and 1979, suggesting that they were represented as 'other' and stereotyped in a negative manner in the years 1944 to 1959 and that, although a shift can be detected after 1960, continuity with the earlier period was retained in the visual imagery of female students and the way in which 'careers' were presented as distinctly male. Elsewhere, an article by Elliott draws on oral history material to explore the reasons why women took up smoking during and following the Second World War. It suggests that smoking among women became more acceptable in a wider range of circumstances following the War, reflecting the adaptability of the cigarette and its role in negotiating an increasingly diverse range of femininities.

Turning to sex and sexuality, Langhammer investigates illegitimate sexual and emotional intimacies involving married heterosexuals, unpacking the social meanings and significance of adultery in post-war England and seeking to explain why attitudes towards adultery hardened across the period, even as the practice became apparently more common. Alongside this increase in adultery one cannot but note a parallel increase in the divorce rate, but the good news is that Gardner and Oswald conclude that, whilst a happy marriage increases happiness, couples with unhappy marriages eventually become happier if they divorce.

The historiography of homosexual law reform in late-twentieth-century Britain has mainly focused on the sexual politics surrounding the Wolfenden Committee and the 1967 Sexual Offences Act (applicable only in England and Wales) but Davidson uses a

range of government archives and the papers of the Scottish Minorities Group to explore the campaign to introduce law reform for Scotland in the period 1967-80. In another change of focus, Jennings, asks why, when gay male subcultures have emerged as the focus of considerable scholarly attention, no comparable work has examined the significance of commercial subcultures in histories of female homosexuality in the UK. Her article, which uses a lesbian bar community of the immediate post-war decades as a case study, sees the lacuna as a function of the largely enclosed and introspective nature of such communities.

In a special issue of *The Political Quarterly* devoted to Michael Young's concept of meritocracy, Land notes that Young did not consider how society might be organised differently from the tradition of leaving domestic work and childcare to wives and servants. Paradoxically, she suggests it was young women's experience in the early years of a postwar welfare state, with its roots in the principle of universality and its meritocratic education system (imperfect though it was), that gave some of them the confidence and determination to question, and to try to reform both collectively and individually both the 'private' world of the 'family' and the 'public' world of politics and economics.

Elsewhere, Lewis examines the relationship between gender and welfare in the latter half of the twentieth century, noting that the gender division of paid and unpaid work has not disappeared, but has rather changed, as women, particularly mothers, go into the paid labour force and stay on. And Smith Wilson explores the several factors contributing to the rapid rise in women working outside the home after the Second World War, noting the importance in this rise of part-time working but arguing that, despite a contemporary tendency to view married women's earnings as 'pin money', they in fact played a key role in creating the affluent society of postwar Britain whilst allowing the ideal of the male breadwinner to continue despite this major social change. But whilst female labour market participation has risen, it is plain that many of those women have found rather less familial support in their care of young children, both from men and from other female family members, a phenomenon explored in an illuminating paper by Short et al that uses US census data over 120 years.

History of Welfare

In the arena of welfare history, there are a number of articles worth mentioning. For example, Digby examines, via case studies of Durham, Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, how the hardships of communities devastated by long-term structural unemployment in the 1980s exposed the inadequacy of a locally based welfare system, where the desire to avoid poverty was itself expected to relieve destitution, and contributed to more positive view of welfare entitlement. The marked rise in unemployment in this period was one of several profound pressures experienced in the years after the 'golden age' but Brooks and Manza consider the apparent resilience of welfare states within many developed democracies over the past 20 years. Similarly, Gatti and Glyn find that, whilst welfare states have been subject to a host of conflicting pressures from high unemployment, rising income inequality, population aging, tax competition, rising budget deficits and debts, slow growth, and fears that economic dynamism was being stifled by excessive taxes and benefit levels, total spending on welfare has nevertheless edged up in many countries and cuts in rates of benefit have generally been fairly modest. But resilience may not necessarily be positive, or so argues Field in an article that indicts the Blair governments for their failure to reform Britain's welfare state even though, he suggests, it is hard to think of more propitious circumstances than prevailed in 1997 for welfare reform.

Not surprisingly, given present concerns about Britain's putative 'pensions crisis', this was also a busy year in the pensions field. A useful paper by Hills briefly outlines the recommendations of the UK Pensions Commission and the data and analysis on which they were based, including projections of demographic change, trends in private pension saving and evolution of the state pension system. In doing so, he surveys more than half a century of demographic change, as well as looking forward to the future. Then, in a special issue of the *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* devoted to this topic, Barr offers a very useful overview of its historical roots, arguing that what matters most is effective government and economic growth; that the debate between pay-as-you-go and funding is secondary; that good pension schemes can take many forms; and that there is a problem in financing pensions, but not a crisis. However, whether one agrees that there is a crisis or not, solving our present problems in UK pensions will almost certainly not be easy, for current options are very much constrained by the historical development of pensions, as Green-Pedersen and Lindblom remind us in their analysis of the respective trajectories of Danish and Swedish earnings-related pensions.

Adopting an explicitly comparative focus, not an easy task in an area of sometimes daunting technical complexity, Whiteside compares how extensions of pension rights were developed and implemented in major European economies in the decades following the Second World War. She suggests that conditions in the UK were not conducive to the development of the sort of hybrid provision, neither state nor market, that was commonly developed on the Continent, the product of negotiated compromises that fostered social representation in the management of collective provision.

Larsen et al review the policy process behind recent welfare reforms, identifying a mix of policy-making methods ranging from the classic top-down approach, through the use of external commissions to a more bottom-up approach, where policy is to a large degree designed by external groups, and suggesting that this inclusive approach contrasts sharply with the traditional directive Westminster model.

Elsewhere, a closely argued paper by Bridgen suggests that the extent of the exchequer contribution demanded by Beveridge's proposals (even after his discussions with Keynes, and even more so after the abolition of the golden staircase) meant that the Beveridge pension was much more redistributive than is commonly thought. An insightful article by Walker and Foster describes the introduction and subsequent development of old age pensions in the UK. In accounting for nearly a century of pensions history they eschew the idea of linear progression and, instead, chart the interrelated histories that constitute the complex picture of retirement income. In doing so, they emphasises that, despite changes in pension provision over this long period and the transformation in work force composition and family structure, many of the same issues that concerned policy makers and campaigners in this field a 100 years ago are still present today.

Banks and Smith analyse declining labour-market activity among older men from the 1970s to the early 1990s, noting that at the top of the wealth distribution early retirement was typically influenced by private, occupational pensions. At the bottom of the wealth distribution individuals, however, were even more likely to be not working in their 50s, but did not typically define themselves as retired but drew on income support, or more usually, disability benefits.

More positively, perhaps, Jackson wonders if the transition to post-Fordism could be seen as resolving the ageing crisis by offering people better work and retirement choices, but concludes that more likely post-Fordism and the parallel ageing crisis are

symptoms of the general movement towards privatisation and laissez faire, which is by no means guaranteed to improve the welfare of older people.

History of Science

One of the features of the period since the Second World War has been the economic and social impact of computers. On this topic, Kline considers debates about competing theories of information in the 1950s and 1960s amongst US and UK mathematicians, physicists, electrical engineers, and social scientists and explores emergence of 'information technology' as a keyword, as a basis for technologically deterministic theories of an 'information society', and ultimately as the basis for the self-conscious creation of a 'new economy' underpinned by an 'information infrastructure'.

Medical History

In the arena of medicine, there were some illuminating, and in one case faintly alarming, articles published in 2006. The alarming article, or alarming to this reader at least, is by Almond – who asks whether the 1918 flu pandemic is really over. Data from the 1960–80 decennial U.S. Census indicate that cohorts in utero during the pandemic displayed reduced educational attainment, increased rates of physical disability, lower income, lower socioeconomic status, and higher transfer payments compared with other birth cohorts. This is a sobering assessment of the very long-term potential consequences of such wide-scale medical phenomena.

A key current concern is how scientific knowledge may inform policy in relation to major environmental and health concerns. As Berridge points out, there are distinct schools of analysis about this relationship between science and policy which stress rational relationships; denial and delay; or the role of networks. History is important in modifying such perspectives, as her case study of smoking policy in the 1950s and 1960s demonstrates. The initial response in the 1950s to the link between smoking and lung cancer was in part conditioned by the role of the tobacco industry and the financial importance of tobacco. Public health interests worked with the industry. But politicians were concerned also about the fluidity of the epidemiological evidence; the dangers of stirring up further pressure over air pollution; the financial and ideological implications of health education and its location; and the electoral dangers of intervening in a popular mass habit.

At the interface between science and medicine, Kraft explores the development of clinical uses for the artificial radioisotope between 1945 and 1965. As part of the broader nuclear enterprise, the radioisotope programme enjoyed powerful political and financial support from the British government. This study examines the range of technical, political, economic, institutional and professional factors that shaped its journey from medical periphery to medical practice. Another study, by Quirke, explores the development by the British pharmacological industry between 1958 and 1978 of beta-blockers – which by 1987 accounted for 36 per cent of the total value of the world's top twenty selling medicines, with nearly 75 per cent of these sales accounted for by products invented and developed in the UK.

But postwar medical history shows continuities as well as radical changes. Welshman, for instance, explores the micro-politics of the tuberculosis screening debate in Britain between 1950 and 1965. He focuses on the question why, given the pressure to adopt a policy of compulsory chest X-rays at ports of entry, did the United Kingdom adopt the port of arrival system in which the major element comprised the forwarding of

addresses of arriving migrants to public health doctors in intended districts of residence? His paper contributes to contemporary discussion about tuberculosis screening and the port of arrival system in the UK, and draws out broader themes to do with nationalism, migration and public health.

Denham considers the implications of the surveys of Birmingham chronic sick hospitals undertaken between the late-1940s and early-1960s. They were taken to demonstrate that no extra beds would be needed because only about one half of all in-patients required hospital care. They highlighted the medical problems of old age and the need for modern long-stay units for elderly in-patients. In his article, Denham also notes that the Birmingham chronic sick hospitals revealed the deleterious medical effects of poor housing in the City.

Urban History

In the field of town planning, Gold considers the genesis, development and subsequent reassessment of the Central Area of Cumbernauld new town – a ‘megastructure’ that typified the convergence between architectural modernism and town planning in the 1950s and 1960s. He highlights the design deficiencies and poor political decisions that blighted the Central Area before commenting on the implications of this episode for understanding the relationship between architectural modernism and town planning.

And in the currently contentious area of housing, Weale notes that housing supply has been extremely weak in the past twenty years or so, as compared to the experience of the housing targets era of the 1950s and 1960s – the key reason for this being the decline in public sector house construction since its peak in the late-1960s, with publicly built completions at a relatively low rate since that date running at about half that of the late-1960s.

Until quite recently many studies of planning and housing provision in post-war Britain were dominated by the role of central government, local authorities and professionals such as architects and planners. Older works often saw tenants as largely insignificant in terms of influencing housing policy. Yet from the late-1960s groups of tenants in urban Britain became increasingly organized into pressure groups. However, an article by Shapely looks at the rise of council tenant groups in Manchester in these years.

Demography

In demography, Connelly notes that scholars, whilst having shown that states had compelling reasons to control populations, have not explained why state officials were so slow to recognize and act on them. The phrase ‘population control’ still evokes this discredited effort to persuade or coerce people to plan smaller families, which culminated in a worldwide campaign conducted under UN auspices in the 1960s and 1970s. Controlling the world’s population inevitably required working with and through particular states. As Connolly points out, this movement was remarkable not just for what it accomplished, but for its sheer audacity in trying to control the population of the world without having to answer to anyone in particular.

A rather different article on demography is that by Demery and Duck, which uses microeconomic data from the 1970s to explore the effects of a changing age-structure on the UK’s aggregate personal savings rate. Their findings suggest that demographic changes had detectable, sustained, but, relative to the yearly changes observed in the savings rate over the previous century, modest effects on aggregate personal sector savings.

Methodologies and the Future of the Discipline

Lastly, we turn to issues of historical methodology, a topic addressed by several thoughtful papers this year. For example, Gunn and Rawnsley assess the impact of the 'postmodern turn' of the 1980s and 1990s on the teaching of history in British universities. Emphasising the centrality of teaching to historians' own professional identity, their paper analyses the theoretical components of curricula and pedagogy at honours and Masters' levels. What it suggests is that, despite the growing influence of theory on historical research and the urge to introduce a greater element of reflexivity into historical education, there is surprisingly limited evidence that postmodernism and the turn to theory has had a significant impact on the teaching of history in British higher education.

There is plainly a desire amongst non-historians for histories that eschew the theoretical complexities and, it must be said, the often impenetrable prose of some postmodern history. Harvie, for instance, wants a return to 'grand narratives' that can 'historicise the new and complex drives within our society'. He is, however, dismissive both of 'modern market-driven, user-friendly "TV history"' and of the theoretical turn in the discipline; for, in his view, 'Fashionable discourses about identity and postmodern consumerism' are 'too remote from the basic business of getting, spending and governing' to be useful. Harvie may rather overstate his case but there is certainly scope for a greater willingness on the part of contemporary historians to address an audience concerned with the ways in which recent history has shaped the society of today, and to illuminate the ways in which history likely constrains and directs options for the future. Yet Southgate highlights a somewhat depressing tradition amongst historians to ensure intellectual and moral respectability within the profession by avoiding at all costs contact with current events and concerns. She argues strongly to the contrary, suggesting that historians need with some urgency to apply themselves to some of the pressing practical and moral problems of the wider world.

But whilst historians might profitably engage with the public, and with their representatives, on the issues of the day perhaps there might also be something to gain from a greater preparedness to engage in a dialogue with our colleagues in the social sciences. The demand is certainly there, as Kerr and Kettell attest in their dissection of the problems faced by scholars in the field of British politics. For example, perhaps issues of trust might be a useful seam for historians to open up, as Hosking suggests. In the last twenty years or so, sociologists have shown that trust is an especially problematic but also especially important feature of modern societies, but they fail to attempt an historical analysis. In this essay Hosking seeks to construct an account of certain crucial junctures in European history when the radius of trust has broadened relatively rapidly and he offers some suggestions as to why a perceived 'crisis of trust' has arisen, both in the contemporary western world and in the global economy, and what might be done about it.

A thoughtful essay by Bevir argues that a developmental historicism dominated the human sciences in the latter half of the nineteenth century but that the turn of the century witnessed an epistemic rupture and the rise of a modernist empiricism that came to dominate the social sciences. Bevir contends that modernist empiricists reformulated their approach during the latter half of the twentieth century in response to alternative visions of social science; and, finally, the close of the twentieth century also saw the rise of a radical historicism that spread from philosophy and literature to history and even social science. Radical historicists and post-structuralists, Bevir suggests, offer new narratives of nation states, often representing the nation state as dispersed, differentiated and discontinuous, and focusing instead on networks of peoples. One challenge, in

Bevir's view, is to clear up an ambiguity about the dispersals, differences and discontinuities they invoke. But another challenge is for historians effectively to engage social scientists, most of whom still favour typologies, correlations and models, rather than sceptical narratives.

Nonetheless, if we are to take up such suggestions for an engagement with social science perhaps we need to be careful about how we go about it. An insightful piece by Mathias notes that the evolution of economic history as a discipline in recent decades has seen the subject profoundly influenced by methodologies in economics and other social sciences. The problem, of course, is that economic history has been simultaneously shrinking as a discipline in its own right. In part this might be because, as Mathias notes, British economic history as a discipline sometimes seems to be disappearing beneath a welter of sub-specialisations, its range having broadened to embrace social and now particularly cultural history. And in turn, the wider awareness of economic relationships in history has certainly impacted on many other types of history and helped to blur sub-disciplinary boundaries. But perhaps Mathias's analysis also contains another message, that historians would be well-advised to avoid the passive use of social science methodologies but should, rather, actively use their particular skills to debate those methodologies directly with their practitioners and, in the process, perhaps contribute to their refinement.

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